A N

ESSAY

ON THE

NECESSITY

OF

Protecting Duties.

DUBLIN:

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TO THE

REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT, FOR THE *CITY* of *DUBLIN.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE dignity of this country was in the laſt ſeſſion of parliament aſſerted with a degree of eloquence, fortitude, and patriotiſm, which will ſerve as a model for the imitation of future generations, when ſunk into a ſimilar ſtate of inglorious abjection. At that period our commerical and political rights were explained and vindicated, and from the captivity of laws, in this enlightened age unneceſſary and oppreſſive, were a million of our countrymen emancipated. To realize the commercial bleſſings, to which we then eſtabliſhed our claim, will no doubt be the object of the preſent ſeſ-

ſion, and as the repreſentatives of the firſt trading city in the kingdom, your peculiar province. A ſubject, gentlemen, of infinite importance now ſolicits your protection. The voice of famiſhing induſtry addreſſes you, and the complaints of an expiring manufacture. Thouſands of your countrymen, whoſe attachment to the ſpot that gave them birth will not *yet* ſuffer them to emigrate, are periſhing thro' want of employment and ſubſiſtence. Direct your eye to that emaciated being, and read in the wildneſs of his looks a degree of miſery, that language is incompetent to expreſs. Methinks I hear him ſay "ſtart "not at the ſqualid aſpect of a fellow "creature, who, in obedience to natures "dictates, gave being to an unoffending "offſpring, from whoſe infancy he truſted their country would not withdraw "the means of ſupport, but who (fatally "deceived) now flies to your pity for "protection from the torture of ſeeing "them expire thro' hunger." Sorry am I to ſay this language, diſtreſsful as it is, is the language of *truth*. Habited in that amiable

amiable garb affliction will find eaſy acceſs to your preſence, and an attentive audience. Permit me therefore to ſtate, under the correction of your judgment, the cauſe of a calamity that threatens to encreaſe; to point out the fatal conſequences which will probably flow from its continuance; what remedy may be moſt happily applied; and principally how far ſuch remedy will operate to the benefit or injury of this kingdom.

The predilection for, and almoſt univerſal conſumption of, the woollen manufactures of other countries, and conſequent rejection of our own, is the acknowledged cauſe, why thouſands of our artizans are famiſhing for want of the neceſſaries of life. The riches of this, are poured into foreign kingdoms, to create a ſuperflux of wealth, which, if confined by legiſlative reſtrictions to Ireland, would provide food for our ſuffering countrymen. Tho' the ſun of public virtue never ſhone with more *fulneſs* than at preſent, yet from the oblique direction of its beams, it does not animate and foſter with a kindly *warmth* that

that country, which ſhould be the firſt object of its care. Should this grievance be of long duration, I tremble to think of the conſequences it may lead to. Our countrymen will accept of that relief from their miſery in a diſtant climate, which their native country refuſes to beſtow.—Tho' Ireland may behold them with an eye of indifference, America invites them, and promiſes to alleviate their affliction. Hence a rage for emigration, which muſt decreaſe the ſtrength and augment the weight of taxation (*a*) in this kingdom. To avert ſuch depopulation, the executive or legiſlative power may deem it good policy to interpoſe. Denied ſubſiſtance in their native, and prevented from obtaining it in a foreign climate, their diſtreſſes may force them, in violation of the laws, to graſp at a participation of that wealth, which, inſtead of encouraging and rewarding their induſtry, is tranſported into a neighbouring iſland to feed the inſatiable appetites of avarice and lux-

(*a*) When the Moors were expelled from Spain, the firſt meaſure of government was to double the Taxes on the remaining inhabitants.

ury.

ury. For prevention our crimnal code may be made to breathe a more ſanguinary ſpirit than at preſent diſgraces it. But what jury will be found ſo deficient in humanity, as to pronounce ſentence of death on the man, who ſhould be forced to the commiſſion of guilt by the impulſe of hunger. Hence impunity, and its monſtrous offspring, unrepenting guilt.

The impracticability of effectually conciliating the affections of the ſiſter-kingdoms, (whom the cloſeſt harmony ſhould cement) 'till ſome mode of relief be adopted, is obvious to every thinking man. The poor of Ireland, by far the moſt numerous part, muſt naturally entertain an implacable hatred againſt any nation, which deprives them of food and raiment by powring in upon them an inexhauſtible ſupply of its manufactures. From ſuch a calamitous ſituation, if ſome immediate redreſs is not obtained, I ſee no remedy but death.

It may be ſaid, the picture of diſtreſs I have drawn is a child of fancy. Would

to

to heaven it were. Our ſenſibility would not then be wounded at the ſight of a multitude of our wretched brethren compreſſing themſelves into an aſylum incompetent to ſhelter them, nor at the appearance of an equal number ſwarming about the ſtreets of the capital to demand rather than ſolicit charity.

The diſeaſe indeed is obvious to the moſt undiſcerning eye, the fatal effects of its continuance apparent to every man of reflection. But what ſpecific remedy can be apply'd with ſafety, and proſpect of ſucceſs is matter of doubt, and therefore ſhall be the next ſubject of conſideration.

Aſſociations in favour of our own manufactures have not been attended with the efficacy expected from them. The reaſon is evident, the Engliſh are able to underſel us in our home markets, and, ſince the influence of ſelf intereſt is ſtronger than that of public virtue, their productions are purchaſed in preference to ours. This advantage in their favour originates

ginates from the great conſumption Britain finds for *her* manufactures, and of courſe the conſtant employment of her working people. The greater conſumption the proprietor of any article meets with, the leſs will that profit be, which he can afford to ſell for. But Ireland has not the twentieth part of the conſumption England has; how then is it poſſible ſhe can equalize her prices with thoſe of Britain? her woollen manufacturers are not employed above one third of the week; muſt they not then, to produce what an Engliſh artiſt has to ſubſiſt on, have 3 times as much for their labour? but ſhould parliament introduce ſome mode of compelling the inhabitants of the kingdom to conſume *excluſively* their own Manufactures, in proportion to the encreaſe of the demand, their price muſt fall. It has been ſaid, "manufacture cheaper than your neigh-"bours and you will exclude their goods," that is, reverſe the order of nature, and fooliſhly expect the cauſe to follow from its effect, but is it not wiſer to ſay, extend your ſales, and you will reduce the

value

value of the commodity ? conſumption is to manufactures, what the vital air is to man ; both, confined without thoſe eſſential preſervatives within a narrow compaſs, muſt quickly periſh. Aſſociations, I will contend, impoſe a tax on the virtuous part of my countrymen, which convenient legiſlative proviſions would remove. For ſince every manufacturer requires a certain income, without which he cannot maintain his family, and ſuch income muſt emerge out of the profits he receives on the ſale of his goods ; the leſs the quantity of goods ſold that income is levied on, the more muſt each yard of the manufacture contribute. But if we depend on aſſociations only, 3-fourths of my countrymen will buy foreign, while the other fourth will purchaſe Iriſh fabricks. Muſt not the patriot conſumers in ſuch caſe then be ſubjected to a tax by 3-fourths greater than it would be, if the purchaſers of foreign woollens were either induced by virtue, or compelled by neceſſity to wear Iriſh manufacture. As one part of the human frame feels the preſſure of the external

ternal air more forcibly, when by means of art, ſome other portion thereof is made to ſuffer none. But ſuppoſing an exact equalization of price and quality to ſubſiſt this inſtant between the fabricks of the ſiſter kingdoms, I aſſert that a great number of my countrymen would be diſpoſed not to purchaſe the produce of their native ſoil. Such of them, as live beyond their fortunes, (and too many there are of that deſcription,) would conſume Engliſh, with which the vender can, from the magnitude of his capital and ſales, afford to give a credit of 16 or 18 months, in preference to the Iriſh, for which the manufactures muſt have an immediate, or very ſpeedy payment.

On mature reflection it appears to me, that the only meaſure, which promiſes ſucceſs, is the impoſition of ſuch a duty on foreign manufactured woollens, as well exclude them from our market. The propoſition, I am aware, will create me a hoſt of foes. "Should Ireland, (ſay they) "adopt it, ſhe will be guilty of ingrati-"tude, breach of compact, and impoli-

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cy." Theſe indeed are heavy charges, but, I truſt, I ſhall be able to vindicate my country from the imputation of ingratitude, and impolicy, and prove that the violation of the compact alluded to was Britain's. An Inveſtigation of the primary charge, naturally leads us to enquire, what ſervices Ireland has received from England? The advocates of the latter will aſſert, ſhe has protected us, and given us the linen manufacture. Almoſt as fatal has the protection of Britain been to Ireland, as that of Spain to the natives of Mexico and Perue. The country of thoſe innocent Americans was invaded, but conſcious of the dignity of human nature, they would not yield to the dictates of unrelenting deſpotiſm, and glorioufly periſhed in defence and poſſeſſion of their liberties. Their gentle ſpirits flew up to the tribunal of the almighty, and implored immediate retribution. They did not ſupplicate in vain. For if the remuneration of ſuffering innocence conſiſts in the puniſhment of its oppreſſors, they have had ample juſtice. That being, in whoſe preſence injury is not ſanctioned with the name of

policy,

policy, nor murdering avarice with the appellation of chriſtian piety, mixed in the oppreſſors cup of gladneſs a ſlow conſuming poiſon. The influx of peruvian wealth into Spain has for ever blaſted the vigour, virtue and glory of that once flouriſhing monarchy.

We too, having been deprived of our laws, and conſtitution, have been afterwards deſpoiled of our manufactures. Yet breathing the air of a colder climate, we were inſenſible of the firſt impreſſions of injury, and have been rouſed only by an accumulation of wrongs. Submiſſion, in the period of our infant weakneſs, may have been dictated by providential wiſdom, reſiſtance might have made the tale of deſolation equally applicable to the Iriſh and the Mexicans. A more exuberant mine of wealth has Ireland been to England, than Peru to Spain, both kingdoms guard their reſpective dominions with the ſolicitude of a miſer, not with the anxiety of paternal affection.

But ſay thoſe advocates, " did not " England give you the linen manufac- " ture" ? diſintereſted nation. Could ſhe give us what ſhe did not poſſeſs ? Germany, Ruſſia, and Holland, not England, excelled in the linnen manufacture, when England firſt promiſed every encouragement to the cultivation of it in Ireland. (*a*) In the hands of thoſe foreigners, it proved an eternal drain of wealth, (*b*) in our poſſeſſion a ſource of affluence, of which the corrupt dependants of an Engliſh court have often participated.

But as the boaſted *beneficence* of Britain has been ſomewhat obliterated from memory by the envious hand of time, it ſhall be my taſk to give legibility to the faded characters, and reſtore them to their original brightneſs.

Thro' the hope therefore, gentlemen, that you will pardon this intruſion on

(*a*) That Ireland was in poſſeſſion of the linen manufactute long before 1698 appears from the 11th and 13th Eliz. which laid a duty on the exportation of linen yarn, and made the attempt to evade the payment of it felony.

(*b*) the importation of linen cloth from France, before the year 1661, amounted annually to 400,000l. Smith on Wool vol. I. p. 210.

your

your patience, I ſhall go back to an early period in the hiſtory of our ſufferings, and obſerve, that, for ſome centuries before the revolution our Iſland depended principally, for the attainment of the neceſſaries, and conveniencies of life, on the exportation of her live cattle to England. (*a*) Not ſolicitous about wealth, and unconſcious of that envy, which a comparative view of her own poverty, and her ſiſters affluence might have excited, ſhe was contented with this confined Notion of traffic. England ſoon ſickened at the proſpect of a competence, which, if augmented to wealth, might have induced our anceſtors to have applied a portion of it to the improvement of their lands, and, being apprehenſive ſays Decker, (*b*) that ſuch a meaſure would depreciate the value of Britiſh ſoil, ordained (*c*) that Ireland ſhould no longer, thro' the medium of commerce, diſpoſe of that ſuperflux of cattle, which remained to her after ſupplying her own wants. Deprived of this ſource of

(*a*) Armenian letters by a learned judge p. 80
(*b*) On Trade, p. 55.
(*c*) By 15 Char. 2. c. 7. in the year 1663.

ſubſiſtance they turned their thoughts to the multiplication of their ſheep, whoſe wool naturally ſuggeſted the idea of cloathing themſelves. By their induſtry, (for the Iriſh were induſtrious, until their ſpirits were ſubdued by the oppreſſion of their neighbours) they manufactured not only what was ſufficient for themſelves, but actually ſupplied Spain and the Netherlands. (*a*) The exportation of our woollens amounted, in the year 1687, to 70,521l. 14s. (*b*) Happy ſhould we have been, if the ſpirit of perſecution had not purſued us thither. Our riſing proſperity but expoſed us to Britain's indignation, and our woollen manufactures muſt at all events be deſtroyed. His then Majeſty, (*c*) forgetting his regal dignity, and paternal duty, meanly deſcended from his throne, to expoſe the rights of 3 millions of his ſubjects to ſale. Yielding to the impulſe of a ſtep father's predilection for his favourite child, he laboured to deprive the younger of her inheritance. By exerting therefore that influence we ſtill com-

(*a*) Armenian lawers, p. 80.
(*b*) Smith on wool, vol. II. p. 243.
(*c*) Wm. 3d.

plain

plain of, he prevailed on our parliament to ſuſpend, for a ſhort period, (*a*) the exportation of our woollen manufacture. Not ſatisfied with this temporary, and partial (*b*) prohibition of our woollen exports, the ſiſter kingdom paſſed an act (*c*) the ſame ſeſſion, making the prohibition perpetual, and univerſal. This was certainly intended as an experiment, to aſcertain what weight human patience was capable of ſuſtaining, but the Iriſh were then too feeble, not to ſubmit to the moſt arbitrary exertions of power. The ancients, in their deſcriptions of the infernal regions, repreſent the puniſhment of Syſiphus to be that of inceſſantly rolling up a mountain a ponderous ſtone, which, having attained the ſummit, inſtantly tumbles to the baſe again. Is the ſentence of the infernal judge more rigid than that of an Engliſh parliament? which encouraged, (*d*) and afterwards annihilated,

(*a*) For 3 years viz. from the 25th March, 16, 99. to the 25 March, 1702. 10 Wm. 3. c. 5.

(*b*) there was no prohibatory duty laid on *frize*, by the Iriſh Parliament.

(*c*) 10 and 11 Wm. 3. c. 10.

(*d*) By a ſucceſſion of Engliſh acts, to the year 1663, the cultivation of the woollen manufacture was encouraged in Ireland.

a manufacture,

a manufacture, that had gained among us the higheſt point of perfection. To palliate the infamy of thus forcibly deſpoiling us of our manufactures, they called ſuch privation a compact. But by what motive can we ſuppoſe our ſiſter kingdom was influenced, when we conſider, that by this depreſſion of ours, ſhe only advanced the proſperity of her natural enemy. France at that period had begun to improve *her* woollen manufacture, but found herſelf unable to ſurmount the impediment occaſioned by the coarſeneſs of her wool. The impolicy of England removed the obſtruction, by reducing our anceſtors to the neceſſity of exporting to France a material, without whoſe aid *her* woollen cloaths could never have rivalled thoſe of Britain.

The conſequence of this, ſays Decker, (*a*) was, that the French found no difficulty in accompliſhing their wiſhes with the aſſiſtance of the Iriſh wool. Hence, in a ſhort time, Britain found herſelf deprived of thoſe markets up the

(*a*) On Trade, p. 55.

Mediterranean,

Mediterranean, which for a conſiderable period ſhe ſupplied without competition, having, by her narrow policy, given France ability to manufacture and vend, in excluſion of her own woollens, three pieces of cloth, (*a*) where the Iriſh could have ſold but one. The principal, and moſt flouriſhing of our manufactures being thus transferred to a hoſtile Kingdom, the hope was not unreaſonable, that Britain would have left us the means of carrying on the miſerable remnant.

In every commerical ſtate, ſays Kaims, the quantity of circulating ſpecie ſhould be adjuſted with the niceſt judgment. And a conſiderable augmentation, or diminution of that proportion are both evils highly injurious to its induſtry and trade. That we ſhould never feel the fatal influ-

(*a*) About 40 years ago, when Decker wrote, Engliſh or Iriſh combing wool was valued at 6l. the pack i. e. 240lbs. and at Abbeville in France, it ſold for 9l. ſo that it appears it came to them one-third dearer than to the Engliſh, but it muſt be obſerved that in a yard of French cloth there is but one third of ours, and the price of labour is one-third leſs in France than in England, which compenſates for the advanced price of the materials, p. 63. The average price of wool in France is now 17d. per lb. Dalrymple on wool.

ence of the former will be Britain's peculiar care. The exiſtence of the latter, ariſing from a donation of our wealth to penſioned foreigners, which cauſes our manufactures and commerce to languiſh, we muſt aſcribe to the charitable remorſe, which Britiſh miniſters have felt for the virtue they have exiled. Conſcious that it flouriſhed moſt in the ſoil of poverty, they wiſhed to preſerve it in *ſome part* of the empire, when baniſhed from the ſeat of Majeſty, and therefore choſe to provide an aſylum for it in Ireland. We might then, conſidering the piety of the motive, forgive the injury done to this Kingdom, by the annual drain of an immence ſum, for the ſupport of men aſſiduouſly employed in defacing the beauty of the Engliſh conſtitution, if to it was not added the cruelty of reproaching (*a*) us, as inſtrumental to its ſubverſion, by furniſhing the means of corruption to its members.

(*a*) Sir Cecil Wray's letter to the printer of the Freeman.

This is a grievance, which from our connection with Britain we are ſenſible of even in time of peace. But whenever the ambition of England has involved her in a war, has it not been productive of the utmoſt diſtreſs to Ireland? feeling every calamity incidental to its operation, without enjoying any participation of the advantages that might have reſulted from its happy concluſion—The little merchandize we were permitted to export, was in conſequence thereof, either captured by the enemies of Britain, or, if fortunate enough to have arrived at the deſtined port, ſo burthened with inſurance, as to be no longer capable of a ſucceſsful competition with thoſe merchants of neutral ſtates, whom, before its commencement, we excluded from the markets by the inferiority of our price. While, in the former caſe, our poverty, and of courſe inability to fit out ſhips of war, prevented our recapturing ſuch a portion of hoſtile property, as might have equipoiſed the loſs ſuſtained by the ſeiſure of our own. Theſe therefore are the ſervi-

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ces, for which Ireland owes ſuch a debt of gratitude to Britain, whoſe affection operates like that of the ape to its young, *necat complectando.*

Having vindicated my country from the primary charge, I proceed to the conſideration of my aſſertion, that Britain has broken her faith with us. A requeſt of the lords, and commons of England to King William 3d, that he would do every thing in his power to "*diſcourage the growing manufacture of* "*woollen cloth in Ireland, whoſe rapid* "*progreſs, (ſay they,) co-operating with the* "*cheapneſs of the neceſſaries of life, induce* "*many Engliſh with their families to ſettle* "*there*" was the foundation of (*what has been called*) the compact of 1698. And, in their addreſs, to force our parliament to impoſe prohibitory duties on all woollen manufactures exported from this country, they, in a haughty tone, declare that ſuch meaſures would be purſued in England to *prohibit and ſuppreſs them*, if not previouſly adopted in Ireland. The propoſition was made to this country with a *poſſitive* promiſe

miſe of the king, lords, and commons of England, to give *all poſſible encouragement* to the *linnen and hempen* manufactures of Ireland without any *reſtriction or limitation whatſoever*. (*a*) With the utmoſt reluctance therefore a prohibitory duty was impoſed by our parliament, for three years, on all woollen goods exported, except *frize*. The law (*b*) paſſed our commons, on a diviſion of 105 (*c*) to 41, partly by the undue influence of the miniſter, but principally from the threats of the Britiſh ſenate. Our parliament having conſidered the weakneſs of the Kingdom, thought it unwiſe to controvert, at that period, the uſurped legiſlative ſupremacy of Britain over their country, and therefore judged it more prudent to paſs this *temporary* law, than, by refuſing, give England any pretence for enacting a *perpetual* one. But how fruitleſs this prudential effort? In the very ſame ſeſſion our ſiſter Kingdom, without even the form of conſulting us, made the prohibition unlimited as to time, and incluſive of our frize,

(*a*) Report of a committee of the Iriſh commons in 1772, on the linnen manufacture.
(*b*) 10 Wm. III. c. 5.
(*c*) Com. Jour, 1104.

which

(*a*) which ſhe had agreed to leave unburdened with a duty on exportation. Such was the deſolation and diſtreſs occaſioned by this revolution, that multitudes, who had derived a competence from their induſtry in the woollen branch, periſhed for want of food; the greater part of thoſe, who eſcaped the calamity, fortunately ſought an aſylum beyond the Atlantic, in that land, where their poſterity have ſo lately contributed to the reſtoration of Iriſh liberty.

But I had almoſt forgotten, in the contemplation of this forcible abduction of our manufactures, the promiſe given us ſo ſolemnly by Britain. Whether it was her intention to adhere to it at the time of its being made, is not for my determination. From events which followed ſuch an inference ſeems plainly deducible.

(*a*) Of which we were in poſſeſſion before the reign of Edw. III. and in which we excelled all other Nations. Anderſon on Com. vol I. 204. In one year the value of our frize exported amounted to 56,485l. Smith on wool vol. 2, p. 243.

By

By 23 Geo. II. a heavy duty was impoſed on all ſail cloth made of *Iriſh hemp*, imported into Britain. Which enabled Ruſſia and Germany in the following year, to ſupply England with 521,741 yards of an article, that ſhould have been taken only from Ireland (*a*) what a ſhameful violation of national faith! (*b*) Has Ireland deſerved ſuch treatment, whoſe annual imports from Britain have, on an average of 10 years, exceeded thoſe of Ruſſia, and Germany, together by a difference in value of 255,825l. (*c*) Or in compliance of what rule of juſtice, is the proſperity of one nation depreſſed, and the welfare of another advanced, by Britain, when the kingdom injured is of infinitely more worth to her, than that, which participates of her bounty. A ſubmiſſion to one injury always induces the commiſſion of another. The

(*a*) Report of the Iriſh parliamentary Com. on Lin. Tr. in 1772.

(*b*) In conſequence of this very oppreſſive act Ireland immediately abandoned the culture of hemp. Iriſh Com. Jour. vol. 16, 365.

(*c*) Report of Britiſh parliamentary. Com. on the linnen trade, in 1774.

policy

policy of England, (an expreſſion, which in ſome countries may mean juſtice) prohibited the importation of all *Iriſh* ſtriped, printed, painted, ſtained and dyed linnen, (*a*) in expreſs violation of her promiſe to give *all poſſible encouragement* to our *linnen* and hempen manufactures. By this law we were deprived of the Britiſh conſumption for thoſe articles. England's next object was to ſuperſede us in the foreign markets, by gradually inveſting herſelf with a principal branch of our linnen manufacture. But to accompliſh this, by any other means, than drawing from us our *raw material* without *advancing its price*, was impoſſible—To have allowed a bounty on its importation would have created an alarm. A ſafer mode was therefore adopted. The miniſter granted a premium on its exportation from England, when manufactured *there*. (*b*) The laſt tranſaction I ſhall mention deſerves attention.

(*a*) 10, 11 and 12 of Anne and 6th Geo. 1ſt.

(*b*) The bounty on the export of cheque from England is one-half penny per yard, and as 1lb. linnen yarn makes 3 yards of cheque, this may be conſidered as a premium of one-penny half-penny per lb. on the importation of the raw material from Ireland. Rep. of Iriſh par. Com. on linnen trade. 1772.

At the time of this *compact*, Holland, Germany, and Ruſſia, ſupplied with linnens the Engliſh market. To exclude them from a competition with our manufactures a duty of ſo much per yard was impoſed on all, as at that period amounted to 30 per cent. But as the German and Ruſſian linnen was then of a very coarſe quality, the duty on a yard of ſuch linnen was leſs by two-thirds, than what was laid on the Dutch, the fineſt that came to England. Mark the conſequence. The Dutch cloth 'tis true, was effectually excluded by the tax, whoſe operation on the German was very different. The northern manufacturers inſtantly varied the quality of *their* linnen, and inſtead of ſending to the Britiſh mart what was worth only 10d. or 1s. they now ſupply it with cloth of 3 Sillings per yard. The duty remains the ſame. Of courſe, tho' it amounted at the period of its impoſition to 30 per Cent. 'tis now decreaſed to 8 or 10. A burthen for which the cheapneſs of the raw material, in thoſe northern Kingdoms, ſo amply compenſates,

that a yard of German can be ſold in London for an *equal price with one of Iriſh linnen.* But ſhould that German cloth be exported, a drawback of the whole duty is allowed, which is equivalent to a *bounty* of 8 or 10 per cent. (*a*) Iriſh linnens of greater value than 18d. per yard are not entitled to any premium on exportation. Here then is obviouſly a preference given to foreign over Iriſh linnens.

We ſhould not therefore be ſurprized to find that in the year 1770, the drawback or bounty on *foreign* linnens amounted to no leſs a ſum than 64,319l. (*b*) Even from their public inſtitutions our linnen manufacture is excluded, and in Greenwich Hoſpital Ruſſian (*c*) only is conſumed.

(*a*) This ſtatement was laid before the Public by the elegant author of Guatimozin, whoſe work, tho' uiverſally read, has never yet been contradicted.

(*b*) Rep. of Com. in 1772, on the linen manufacture.

(*c*) In the year 1771 the quantity of linnen imported from Ruſſia into England amounted to 3,119,136 yards. Rep. of the Com. on lin. Tr. in 1773.

But for cenſuring England's diſpoſition to give a reception equally favourable to the cloth of Ruſſia or Germany, as of Ireland, perhaps I am to blame. There may ſubſiſt a *compact* with *the* latter nation too, who, 'tis poſſible, may have refuſed to tranſport her mercenaries to America for the ſubjugation of our emigrated brethren, till great Britain had promiſed never to raiſe the prohibitory duties formerly impoſed on her linnens to their original amount. From this ſtatement I ſhall not deduce any inference, but tranſcribe the reſolution of the committe of the Iriſh commons in 1772, "We are unanimouſly of opinion that the levying "any duties or tax on the exportation of cheques, ſtained linnens, or "ſail cloth from Ireland, is an "infringement of the general encouragement promiſed us on our relinquiſhing (*a*) the woollen manufacture."

(*a*) Com. Jour. Iriſh, p. 190. this is an erroneous opinion, Ireland never promiſed to relinquiſh the woollen manufacture.

The

The next, and moſt important, point to be conſidered is, whether it is conſiſtent with that good policy Ireland ought to purſue, to impoſe protecting duties on foreign woollen goods imported into this Kingdom. The principal objections againſt the meaſure are raiſed by thoſe of my fellow citizens, who, being engaged in the exportation of our linnens, fear their intereſts will be deeply injured by the refuſal of England to receive them in future. Can they imagine the diſpoſition of the ſiſter kingdom has been rendered, ſanguinary by the proſecution of a tedious war, as to induce her to pour her vengeance on us, for only yielding to the impulſe of compaſſion, and ſupplying the wants of our famiſhing countrymen by a reſolution to wear *their* induſtry *alone*—Or do they think 'tis matter of indifference to the royal breaſt, whether the faithful ſubjects of Ireland ſhould derive what is eſſential to their exiſtence from their honeſt induſtry, emigration, or a violation of the laws. The circumſtance of being removed by chance

chance near 400 miles from the reſidence of our king can have no weight—The ſubjects of great Britain and Ireland ſhould be and doubtleſs are *equally* the objects of his paternal care, and ſuch of them, as feel diſtreſs moſt ſenſibly, he will be diſpoſed more immediately to relieve---When the inhabitants of the ſecond city in his dominions periſh for want of food, will the father of his people prevent their attainment of it from their countrymen, by refuſing them permiſſion to barter for it the produce of their labour?

But ſhould the meaſure awake the indignation of a Britiſh miniſter, thank heaven our liberties reſt on a baſis too ſecure to dread the ſhock. Time has been when we trembled at the ſound. As did the affirighted Indian when the artillery of columbus firſt thundered in his ear. The *deſtructive* inſtrument became ſucceſſively the object of his adoration, curioſity, contempt. Such has been in Ireland the fate of a Britiſh miniſters authority—The period of poli-

tical

tical ſuperſtition is now no more, whilſt civil, the daughter of religious liberty, revives the golden age, and reigns over half the world.

At ſuch an era, (I ſay) we may *venture* to enquire, what might be the conſequence of our parliament's reſolving that we ſhould cloath ourſelves. The opponents of the meaſure object, that, from a principle of retaliation, England will lay a prohibition on the import of *our* linnens and exonerate the German from their preſent duty---That the latter plan will never be adopted I have little doubt---By ſuch a meaſure ſhe would withdraw from *her own* linnen manufacture its chief protection, and fooliſhly expoſe *her* boſom naked to her rival. (*a*) Ireland might receive a wound, but the ſword, which inflicts it, muſt firſt paſs thro' the heart of *Britain*---The king of Ireland will never con-

(*a*) It appeared the importation of foreign linnen into England injured materially the *Britiſh* linnen manufacture, Rep. of Britiſh Par. Com. on linnen trade, 1774.

ſent

ſent to transfer a ſource of wealth to foreigners, which contributes ſo largely to the ſupport of the civil and military eſtabliſhment of his Kingdoms--- From thoſe, who have ſo often hazarded their lives in his defence, to nations that have, and may again be diſpoſed to invade his continental dominions---But ſince to guard againſt every poſſible danger, and prevent the future, tho' remote, diſtreſſes of his country, is not leſs the duty of a good citizen, than to preſs the adoption of laws for the removal of its preſent ſufferings, I ſhall for a moment admit the probability of an excluſion, and to the beſt of my ability weigh the effects which may reſult from it---As a ground work for the inveſtigation, it will be proper to ſtate, what the annual quantity of linnens is, which England receives from this country. By the accounts laid before the Britiſh parliament within a few years, of the linnens brought into England, it appears that their value did not exceed 3 millions. Of which one and a half

was

was paid for foreign, half a million for Scotch, and about one million for Iriſh. (*b*) And by the ſame documents it appeared, that England then manufactured between checques, Hucabacks &c. about 3 millions. So that Ireland ſupplies but *one ſixth* of Britain's demand. Having already proved that the acceptance from us of ſo very ſmall a ſhare of the quantity ſhe has occaſion for, is a breach of her expreſs promiſe made in 1698, the next point to be conſidered is, ---In what extent a refuſal to take from us the proportion we now furniſh would injure us.

A very conſiderable quantity of this import from us conſiſts in coarſe linnens, of which no ſmall part is ſtamped in England, *for home* conſumption, and the reſiduum is exported *plain* (*c*) to

(*b*) Rep. of the Britiſh Com. on lin. Tr. in 1774. ſtates the annual import of Iriſh linnen into Britain to be at a medium, from 1759 to 1765, 13,737238 yards, which at 18d. per yard make 1,030,292l. 17s.

(*c*) No Iriſh linnen is ſtamped for exportation. Rep. of Com. on the Iriſh Lin. Trade, in 1774, Sileſian only is uſed for that purpoſe.

foreign

foreign countries. In 1770 (*a*) the Bounty claimed on exportation amounted to 16,921l. and of courſe the value of what was exported in that year to 169,210l. The peculiar qualities of this ſpecies of our linnen render it eſſential not only to the ſtamping trade of England, but of other Kingdoms---Being, from its ſuperior ſoftneſs, more capable of imbibing the dye, and conſequently, retaining it longer than any ſubſtitute.--- Should England then exclude *this deſcription* of our linnens, we will not want a market for them. Facts (*b*) have happened lately in Spain, which it is requiſite every Iriſhman ſhould be informed of.---That Kingdom, from a conviction, no doubt, that wearing her own induſtry is the moſt effectual meaſure to reſtore *her* manufactures *alſo* to their once flouriſhing ſtate, has, not long ſince, impoſed preventing duties on the importation of all *printed* linnens--- Sen-

(*a*) Rep. on the Lin. Trade, of Ireland in 1772.
(*b*) The letter from his correſpondent at Cadiz, which contained this information was put into my poſſeſſion by a moſt intelligent and reſpectable fellow Citizen.

 ſible,

ſible, tho' late, of her weakneſs in tranſporting to England her dye ſtuf, to take it back when ſpread on a piece of canvas, (as we ſend thither our bay, and linnen yarn, to be returned, when wrought into a web,) ſhe began to think, and finally reſolved, that from performing the ſimple operation a Spaniard might derive no leſs advantage than an Engliſhman---What ſubſtratum fitted beſt her purpoſe was the next conſideration. Having inſpected minutely the qualities of the Ruſſian, German, Britiſh, and Iriſh linnens, ſhe gave the preference in favour of the Iriſh (*a*).

Methinks the cloud my propoſition for protecting duties lately collected on the brow of my countryman, the linnen manufacturer, is in ſome meaſure diſſipated by this ray of hope, whoſe influence however ſhall not ſtop there, but extend itſelf even to the *woollen*

(*a*) The ſingle houſe of Amandus de Coſta of London ſhipped for Spain from the Peace to the 1ſt Inſtant 18,000 pieces of coarſe Iriſh linnen.

manufacturer.

manufacturer. It ſhall baniſh from his countenance that deſpondency, which habitude has made familiar, and cover his emaciated features with a ſmile. Too long have we perſiſted in the folly of bringing from England thoſe colouring materials, which are not her own produce. The abſtract of our imports under that deſcription for 1781 now lies before me,--From whence it appears, we are ſupplied by Britain with the whole amount of the cochineal, fuſtick, braziletts, and by far the greater part of the indigo and redwood we conſume, inſtead of reſorting to the fountain heads, Spain, and Portugal, of whoſe dominions thoſe are the growth. Will any perſon ſay, we could not have thoſe materials at a more *reduced price*, by bringing them *directly* from the countries, to which their native ſoil is appendant, than we now have, by receiving them thro' the medium of England, enhanced as they are in their purchaſe by commiſſion, double freight, fees, inſurance, and profit on importation. Need I add, what is well known,

that

that Britain, after ſelecting the moſt perfect of each ſpecies, ſends us only the adulterated reſiduum of her market---When therefore the Engliſh manufactures are made of the beſt materials at the loweſt price, and the Iriſh of an inferior kind at the higheſt, how is it poſſible ours ſhould be able to maintain a competition with thoſe of the ſiſter Kingdom?

Why then, ſay the Engliſh, dont you go to the ſame markets we do? 'tis cruel to add inſult to injury, and after depriving us of the means of attaining wealth, or when attained, wreſting it from us, aſk why we have not capitals---Tho' we have not capitals, we poſſeſs, I truſt, good ſenſe enough too ſee our error, and to purſue that direct path which leads to them, and England has pointed out to us---By ſending our coarſe linnens to thoſe countries, which Britain ſupplies with them, we might return freighted with the raw materials for our fabricks, vend them on moderate terms,

and

and thereby enable the manufacturer, with the co-operation of an extended demand, to cloath his countrymen cheaper than England. The bounty, which Britain allows on our coarſe linnens ſent from *her* ports, 'tis equally our advantage to give, when ſhipped from *hence*--- For in ſuch caſe, we could ſupply the purchaſer on more moderate terms, than England, who muſt advance the price in proportion to the expence, which is incident to their tranſportation from one ſiſter Kingdom to the other.

And what is the conſequence of not being our own carriers? I am well informed the ſhipping belonging to the port of Dublin does not exceed 20 ſail---The little merchandize, we now export is ſent abroad in Britiſh bottoms, which never come here to be freighted, but when diſappointed at home—In ſuch a ſituation, ſuppoſe an Engliſh and an Iriſh merchant had each ready for exportation a bale of manufactures of the ſame quality, the latter, before he can convey the article to the

foreign

foreign mart, muſt wait, untill the veſſel, which is to carry the Britiſh bale, ſhall have left it, perhaps, at that very mart, returned to the port ſhe ſailed from, and arrived in Ireland. Is it not therefore obviouſly our intereſt to be our own carriers, to bring immediately from the countries that produce them, the materials of which our fabricks are made, and of courſe to ſend directly to the conſuming countries our coarſe linnens (*a*).

But ſays my opponent, admitting we could eaſily find a market for our coarſe, we might not for our fine linnens—We have it in our power, I anſwer, to make room for their conſumption to a conſiderable amount by the excluſion of one out of the infinite number of our imports from England---Printed cottons---Why ſhould not our fine linnens occupy *their* place---The ſubſtitute, (anſwers ſome fair daughter of Hibernia)

(*a*) By the moſt authentic information, our courſe cloth conſtitutes four-fifths of our linnen exports.

is not ſo warm---Say then my lovely but thoughtleſs ſiſters, whoſe delicate nerves ſhrink even from the healthful breeze of ſpring, what is to become, in the enſuing ſeaſon, of 30,000 of our wretched fellow creatures, who have no raiment to protect them from the killing froſt of winter? Has not providence given *them* ſenſibility, and formed *your* ſouls for ſympathy? The robe, which gives food to the half famiſhed artizans, will make you appear not leſs, but infinitely more amiable. Admitting our own linnens were not remarkable for their elegance, as you know they are, but the rudeneſs of their texture, the very coarſneſs of our Iriſh manufacture would expreſs the ſoftneſs of your mental frame more forcibly than the fineſt web of India. In painting, where the principal figure, drawn by a maſters hand, is excellent, the drapery may be neglected. Cloathed in modeſt plainneſs, the roſe for its internal ſweetneſs, is preſſed more cloſely to the ſenſe than all the gawdy products of the garden. Do not then the ſofteſt

accents

accents, aſſure me, my fair country-women would, if it were neceſſary, renounce Engliſh manufactures, and all the frippery fabricks of Scotland.

England's excluſion of *our* linnens would only produce our excluſion of *her* manufactures. Such a meaſure would, for ſelf protection, force us to *manufacture that linnen yarn at home*, which is now exported, and to a conſiderable amount worked up in Britain. With reſpect to the practice of exporting our *bay* yarn I ſhall at preſent give no opinion. The growth of wool is not of a very precarious, or fluctuating nature, for ſhould we compare the national products of many ſucceſſive years one with another, perhaps we might find them nearly *equal*. The woollen manufacturer requires a *certain* quantity of this material for his purpoſe, and after ſuch quantity is furniſhed him, there may be a ſurplus. Whether it is judicious to permit the exportation of ſuch ſuperflux, either in its native,

native ſtate, or converted into yarn is a queſtion much litigated. I ſhall only ſay Lord Kaim's, and Sir John Dalrymple maintain the affirmative, and many very eminent men the negative.

But with reſpect to the policy of exporting our *linnen* yarn to any country whatſoever, I beg leave, Gentlemen, to trouble you, and the reſt of my fellow Citizens, with ſome obſervations—To the records (*a*) of parliament I appeal for the truth of my aſſertion that the flax grown in Ireland is ſuperior to the produce of any other ſoil on the habitable globe, and by the ſame authority I am juſtified in affirming, that our crops, depending on a variety of contingent circumſtances, are not (like the wool) equally productive every year, but frequently deficient in both quantity and quality. In a prolific ſeaſon, the landholder will, after ſupplying our own manufacturers with the proporti-

(*a*) Iriſh Com. Jour. for 1773, p. 190.

on required, have a redundancy for exportation. In an unfruitful one, there will be deficiency, and in ſuch caſe, our weavers are obliged to ſupply themſelves from Ruſſia with a very inferior kind, at a price ſo much enhanced by *her* export, and *our* import duties, freight and inſurance as muſt put it totally out of our power (ſays the report) (*a*) to maintain a competition with that Kingdom, in the coarſe trade our moſt dangerous rival. The evil is great I am told, but how will you remedy it? Will you, by depriving the landholder, and the ſpinner of the foreign market, diſcourage the one from growing, and the other from ſpinning the material. Far be ſuch folly from me. The one ſhould receive the price of his flax, and the other of her labour, the moment they are ſaleable. Let government then, who with ſo much aſſiduity have protected, and therefore made to flouriſh, the linnen manufacture, appropriate a ſum of money

(*a*) Rep. Iriſh Com. on Lin. Trade, 1773.

to

to erect ware houſes, and purchaſe up the redundant flax and linnen yarn of one year, and ſell it to the weaver in a ſucceeding year of ſcarcity---'Till theſe poſitions therefore are controverted, I ſhall be of opinion that the exportation of our linnen yarn (*a*) is impolitic. In France, with a view to ſupport the linnen manufacture of Britanny, the export of thread, flax, and hemp, is prohibited under a very heavy penalty (*b*).

It would be tedious to enumerate that infinite variety of manufactures we import from Great Britain, by excluding which, for ſelf protection, we might make ample room for the induſtry of our own country; let therefore the papers laid before parliament furniſh the nature, and amount of our imports. For the principle of retaliation I am no advocate, 'tis a two edged ſword, that wounds no leſs the

(*a*) The value of linnen yarn exported from Ireland, 1771, amounted to 204,996l. ſame Rep.
(*b*) Kippax on Com. p. 70.

hand

hand that holds, than that which guards againſt it. Without the imputation of hypocriſy, I truſt, I could take an Engliſhman, or North Britain to my arms, and forgiving every injury they have done my country, thus expreſs my conviction, that the property of the three Nations depends on our union, and diſpoſition reciprocally to conſult each other's intereſt. But I confeſs 'tis more than my patience can bear, to hear either of them thank heaven for his luxurious repaſt, while my countrymen complains. Britiſh policy deprives them of the mere neceſſaries of life. In ſuch a caſe, what is the unreaſonable requeſt the latter make of their king and the Iriſh ſenate? that they would confine 197,924l. (*b*) to this country, to compenſate their induſtry, and provide them food and raiment---Compare this with the amount of Britain's annual exports in the woollen trade, on an a-

(*b*) The value of our annual import of old and new drapery from England, on an average of 10 years from 1770 to 1781.

verage

verage of 10 years from 1770 to 1781. 3,796,365l. To England what a paltry ſum the former? what a mine to Ireland?

Did we doubt what meaſures ought to be purſued in our preſent calamitous ſituation, the examples of England, and other Nations in ſimilar diſtreſs, would inform us, ſo early as the third of Edward IV. an Engliſh act paſſed to reſtrain the importation of manufactured *woollen* goods. By an edict of Lewis XIV. all Dutch and Spaniſh cloaths imported into France pay 50 per Cent duty. (*a*) Yet tho' the impoſition of a protecting duty is the moſt obvious, and infalliable means of re-eſtabliſhing and encouraging our woollen manufactures, other meaſures ought not to be neglected. Above all, let not Ireland ſubmit to any tax being laid, as in England, on the neceſſaries of life. The duties, (ſays L. Kaims,) with which that nation has loaded, the articles of

(*a*) Keppox on Com. p. 70.

coal,

coal, candle, leather, ſoap, ſalt, malt and malt liquor, carry in their boſom a ſlow poiſon by raiſing the price of labour and manufactures---De Wit, continues he, obſerves, that the Dutch taxes on conſumption have raiſed the price of their broad cloth 40 per cent, and the Engliſh by ſimilar means to 30 per cent. Britain (he goes on) has long laboured under this chronical diſorder, which by excluding her from foreign markets, will not only put an end to her own manufactures, but open a wide door to the foreign, as ſmuggling cannot be prevented, when commodities imported are much cheaper than our own.

Theſe, Gentlemen, are the ideas, which have fallen within my obſervation. With the utmoſt deference they are ſubmited to your judgment, and my fellow citizens. Should the folly of expoſing my weakneſs be aſcribed to a zeal for their proſperity, the generous act will fully compenſate my labour. To their ſpirit I commit the execution of this plan, if

approved,

approved, in favour of our expiring manufacture; convinced, by experience of their paſt conduct, how true the following obſervation of Lord Kaim's is, "A progreſs in the arts ſeldom fails to "be rapid among a people raiſed out "of a torpid ſtate by a fortunate change "of circumſtances. Proſperity, contraſted "with former abaſement, gives to the "mind a ſpring, which is vigorouſly "exerted in every new purſuit." In the preſſent eſſay, I truſt, is proved, that aſſociations alone in favour of our manufactures will not adequately relieve, protecting duties alone will---That Britain has broken her faith with us, that the Iriſh never promiſed to relinquiſh even the *export* of her woollens for a longer time than 3 years, that it is not in the power, at leaſt not the intereſt, of England to hurt our linnen trade, in my next addreſs to you I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that Ireland ought not to depend on the linnen trade only, that the woollen, as it has been coeval, ſo it ought to be favoured in at leaſt a coequal degree---And endeavour to point

out

out the immenſe advantages we ſhould derive from giving it every poſſible encouragement.

I have the Honor to be,

with the utmoſt Reſpect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt obedient

humble Servant,

A MANUFACTURER.